



File Code: 2670

Date: 12/19/01

Ms. Susan Martin
Field Supervisor
US Fish and Wildlife Service
11103 East Montgomery Drive
Spokane, WA 99206

Dear Susan:

I am writing in regard to your request dated April 16, 2001 that the Lynx and Wolverine Steering Committee oversee the review of the unsigned white paper" entitled, "*Management of Canada Lynx in the Cascades Geographic Areas of Oregon and Washington*", and presented by you on April 30, 2001, at the Steering Committee meeting. You are aware that the Steering Committee accepted your recommendation and assigned review of the "white paper", to Dr. Len Ruggiero and two past members of the Lynx Science Team (now disbanded) and the Lynx Biology Team on April 30, 2001.

The written reports from Science Team members and the Lynx Biology Team were completed after extensive review of the "white paper." An element of the agreed upon review process was that the Lynx Biology Team would commence their review once they had received the scientists' written report. This procedure was followed, and is consistent with the way we designed our science-based conservation approach to utilize the best biology and ecology principles, as well as the most relevant data.

It was the unanimous consensus of the Steering Committee based upon the written reports and comments from members, that the "white paper" did not provide evidence that lynx were more widespread and abundant in Oregon and Washington than previously thought. The additional lynx records reported in the "white paper" did not change the quality of our understanding of lynx distribution in Oregon and Washington (see Biology Team response, pages 17-18; and, McKelvey and Aubry, Science Response, June 12, 2001).

In summary, the "white paper" did not present substantive evidence, data or biological interpretations that provide a basis for the Science reviewers or the Lynx Biology Team to recommend any change in current direction to mapping lynx habitat or an amendment to the *Lynx Conservation Assessment and Strategy (LCAS)* or its implementation.

We have had a number of interagency staff members spend considerable time reviewing the "white paper" and providing their written comments. At our meeting in October 2001, both the State of Washington and the State of Oregon representatives stated that the "white paper" was not compelling and strongly supported the positions taken by the scientists and the Biology Team. The Steering Committee agreed that it is time to move on with the many other issues involved in lynx conservation. I am officially relaying this decision to you, as requested, with attachments that include the Science response and the Lynx Biology Team report. I trust this matter is closed.



Please feel free to contact me if you have questions.

Sincerely,

/s/ Kathleen A. McAllister

KATHLEEN A. MCALLISTER

Deputy Regional Forester

Encl

Cc members, Lynx and Wolverine Steering Committee

Dr. Len Ruggiero, past Team Leader Lynx Science Team

James J. Claar, Leader, Lynx Biology Team